Wind energy project by NTPC

†2237. SHRI KALRAJ MISHRA: Will the Minister of POWER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that NTPC is formulating plans to set up project in wind energy sector with the aid of the World Bank;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether some private companies would also participate in this plan;

(d) the location identified for this purpose and by when such energy project would be set up along with the quantum of power that would be generated through this project; and

(e) whether NTPC has technical expertise for generation of wind energy and if not, in what manner this deficiency would be removed?

THE MINISTER OF POWER (SHRI SUSHILKUMAR, SHINDE): (a) and (b) In the Corporate Plan of NTPC Ltd. it is envisaged to add a capacity of 1,000 MW through Renewable Energy Sources. Out of 1,000 MW, 650 MW is to be added through wind energy by 2017. At present there is no proposal of NTPC Ltd. for taking up wind energy projects with World Bank. However, NTPC Ltd. has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Asian Development Bank (ADB) on 23rd July, 2007 for setting up a Joint Venture (JV) company to undertake renewable power generation including wind energy.

(c) The JV company as proposed will be formed among NTPC Ltd., ADB and other strategic investors. Some of the strategic investors could be from private sector.

(d) NTPC Ltd. is in the process of assessing various potential locations for wind energy generation in association with Centre for Wind Energy Technology (C-WET), an autonomous Research and Development (R&D) institution under Ministry of New & Renewable Energy (MNRE).

(e) NTPC Ltd. has expertise for capacity addition for renewable energy sources including wind energy. However, for 50 MW Wind Farm on fast track, NTPC Ltd. has approached C-WET as consultant.

Power theft

2238. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL: Will the Minister of POWER be pleased to state:

(a) whether power theft is a major impediment for the growth of power sector in the country;

(b) if so, whether Government had directed the State Governments to launch a special drive against power theft;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(d) whether private power companies are harassing consumers in the name of power theft and acting in an arbitrary manner by increasing power rates, etc. particularly in Delhi;

(e) if so, the action taken so far, by Government in this regard;

(f) whether any special courts are being set up for speedy disposal of power theft cases; and

(g) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF POWER (SHRI SUSHILKUMAR SHINDE): (a) to (c) Theft of electricity is one of the major contributing factors impacting the financial health of power utilities adversely. This also contributes to poor quality of power supply, frequent load shedding and unscheduled outages. The financial health of a power utility is also one of the criteria for assessing the viability of new investments.

The reduction of technical and commercial losses is one of the critical components for improving distribution segment which come largely in the purview of the State. To enable effective control of theft of electricity, the Electricity Act, 2003 has incorporated specific provisions for detection of theft, speedy trial of theft related offences and also for the recovery of the charges of electricity stolen. Based on the feedback from the States and other stakeholders, the Central Government has further strengthened the theft related provisions in the Act by enacting the Electricity (Amendment) Act, 2007.

By this amendment in the Act, theft of electricity has been explicitly made a cognizable and non-bailable offence. The distribution licensees have been empowered to disconnect the supply of electricity upon detection of theft. The penalty for repeated theft of electricity by large consumers has also been enhanced.

The Central Government has also requested the State Governments to take steps for effectively curbing power theft and has advised the introduction of suitable incentive schemes for informers who give clue of the source of theft of electricity. The reward in such a scheme is to be linked to the amount of recoveries that can be effected in the cases reported. The State Governments have also been requested to expedite setting up of special courts as provided in the Electricity Act, 2003 for speedy disposal of theft related cases.

The Central Government has built a national consensus to focus on a time bound programme for reduction of Aggregate Technical and Commercial (AT&C) losses. In the Chief Ministers' Conference held under the chairmanship of the Prime Minister on 28th May, 2007, a unanimous resolution was adopted which *inter alia* included the commitment of the States, with appropriate assistance from the Centre, to establish the necessary baseline data and information technology applications for energy accounting and auditing, and for ensuring a resolute elimination of electricity theft. In the Conference, the States committed themselves to achieve and sustain drastic reduction in the overall AT&C losses in the next five years and at least to a level of 15% in the Accelerated Power Development and Reforms Programme (APDRP) project areas.

APDRP was launched in 2002-03 under which additional central assistance was provided to States for taking up technical, commercial and management measures to reduce the losses. The technical measures included upgradation and strengthening of the distribution system, adoption of High Voltage Distribution System, Information Technology intervention, etc. Commercial measures included metering and billing and improved revenue collection. Management measures included adoption of energy accounting and proper network planning for future expansion, preparation of monitoring of the distribution system, etc.

(d) and (e) Section 42 of Electricity Act, 2003 provides for establishment of a Forum for redressal of grievances of the consumers in accordance with the guidelines as may be specified by the State Electricity Regulatory Commission (SERC). Any consumer, who is aggrieved by non-redressal of his grievance has the option to represent his grievance to an authority known as Ombudsman, who shall settle the grievance of the consumer within such time and in such manner as may be specified by the State Commission. The disconnection of electricity upon detection of theft is to be done only by an officer of the licensee who has been authorized by the Regulatory Commission. It is also mandatory to lodge a First Information Report (FIR) within 24 hours of detection of theft of electricity. Determination of power tariffs of distribution licensees is the statutory function of the SERCs. In doing so SERCs are guided by the provisions contained in section 61 of the Electricity Act, 2003 which, *inter alia*, include the factors that would encourage competition, efficiency, economical use of resources, safeguarding of consumers interests and at the same time ensure recovery of cost of electricity in a reasonable manner and the National Electricity Policy and the Tariff Policy. The SERC is required to determine tariff in a transparent way after hearing various stakeholders.

(f) and (g) Section 153 of the Act empowers the State Government to constitute Special Courts to ensure speedy trial of the offences relating to theft of electricity. States of Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Chhattisgarh, Delhi, Gujarat, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Orissa, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand and West Bengal have already constituted special courts for trial of electricity theft cases.

Completion of power projects

2239. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL: Will the Minister of POWER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have any effective policy for an early completion of on-going power projects and for setting up of new projects in the country;

(b) the details of power projects completed during 2006-07 and the number of projects which are nearing completion as on date;

(c) the details of proposals pending for approval of the Central Electricity Authority (CEA) as on date, particularly pertaining to Rajasthan and Orissa;

(d) the reasons for slow progress in completion of on-going power projects State-wise; and

(e) the steps Government have taken or propose to take in this regard?